

VZCZCXRO4477

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLN
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DE RUEHAH #0825 1830353

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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3077

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5383

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3111

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2976

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3627

RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC

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RUEAAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3677

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000825

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN,

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR PGOV KCRM SOCI TX

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: DRUG DEALING VILLAGERS DIG MOATS TO
KEEP POLICE AWAY

¶1. (SBU) On June 27 at 07:00am, a local contact riding in an SUV saw a resident of the village Gysa in Ruhabat district outside of Ashgabat parked in an old car. As the contact's SUV approached, the driver of the old car started his car and sped off quickly. Post's contact was not surprised, because he had been told previously that residents assume SUVs entering the village are driven by police. The SUV driver flagged the villager down to explain that he just needed directions to the pond. The villager suspiciously asked "Who are you? What's your name? What are you doing here?" After the SUV driver answered, he gave them directions. However, the SUV driver, driving closer to the village, saw that the villagers had dug a trench filled with water from the nearby river in order to create a moat that would prevent police cars from entering the village. Villagers could still leave that side of the village on motorcycle, or the other side of the village via car. Police vehicles approaching from the far side of the village could easily be seen from a long distance. Gysa was full of motorcycles on that day. The driver of the SUV said that Gysa residents grow their own marijuana and deal in all forms of narcotics. He also said that people in the village -- full of yurts and shacks -- are some of the most paranoid people in Turkmenistan.

¶2. (SBU) COMMENT: The village's shantytown-like appearance belies any wealth that locals were accumulating from their narcotics business. It's not surprising that people without any other source of income decided to enter the drug trade, or that they are discreet about the income from it. Still, the villagers' activities must be an open secret to the authorities, who apparently allow it to continue. To run the risks attendant with involvement in this business, dealing in narcotics must be lucrative, regardless of outside appearances. END COMMENT.

MILES